

PSYCHOLOGICAL MEDICINE: AN INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHIATRY. By Desmond Curran, C.B.E., M.B., F.R.C.P., D.P.M., and Maurice Partridge, D.M., M.R.C.P., D.P.M. Fifth Edition. (Pp. viii + 427; figs. 20. 30s.) Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone, 1963.

THIS book was first published twenty years ago and, with subsequent editions, it has become established as one of the standard introductions to psychiatry. By its very nature, psychiatry is a field still characterized by many uncertainties, yet the authors have been successful in presenting basic principles in a succinct and balanced manner. The introductory chapter is particularly valuable in that it outlines the difficulties which the undergraduate is likely to experience when he comes to the systematic study of psychiatry and is required to broaden his concept of illness in order to include its psychological as well as its organic aspects. The various psychiatric disturbances are described in a detailed, but lucid manner and both students and doctors will find much of clinical value in this book. The differentiation of depression into "psychotic" or "reactive" types and involuntional melancholia will be at variance with teaching in some centres. Again, not all clinicians will accept the author's arguments regarding the necessity or validity of classifying mental illness into two major groupings, namely psychoses and neuroses. Nevertheless, this book can be recommended enthusiastically to the student for use in conjunction with his lecture notes which will indicate any differences of emphasis within his own medical school. The student who wishes to read more extensively than his few prescribed psychiatric textbooks is in danger, without guidance, of accepting much unreliable material and thereby equating all schools of thought as being of equal significance. The bibliography of "a small selection of textbooks useful to the student" which has been incorporated is, therefore, most useful in this respect. S. J. K.

CARDOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUE. By A. Schott, M.D. (Heidelberg), M.R.C.S. Second Edition. (Pp. 140; illustrated. 25s.) London: William Heinemann Medical Books, 1963.

THIS is a most useful little book. Although the authors intend it for cardiological technicians, all physicians who employ electronic instruments for recording physiological data will find in it lucid descriptions of basic physics. The galvanometer, valve amplifiers, transistors, cathode ray tubes and sound recording apparatus are fully described. Most important, the end of each chapter has an ample bibliography of basic physics. The reader will find many useful tips about electrocardiographic technique. A serious study of this book will undoubtedly increase the confidence of anyone who employs the range of electronic cardiological instruments. Every department of cardiology should have a copy. It is highly recommended.

E. F.

OUTLINE OF HUMAN REPRODUCTION. By Ian MacGillivray, M.D., F.R.C.O.G. (Pp. 100; figs. 11. 10s.) Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone, 1963.

IN his preface the author claims that this book is intended to acquaint the beginner, either student nurse, pupil midwife or medical student, with the whole subject of human reproduction in broad outline without considering in detail the clinical management of patients.

It is doubtful whether this laudable purpose can be achieved within the compass of a small book of less than one hundred pages which cannot but be inadequate unless supplemented by the usual course of systematic lectures. And, as an addition to these appears unnecessary as an introduction to obstetrics and gynaecology, such a brief text suffers inevitably from over-simplification which misleads, while it is not free from excessive detail at times. Any reference to treatment should preferably be in the most general terms, yet the beginner might readily be left with ideas regarding treatment which are by no means generally applicable, for example, that various minor local conditions are habitually treated by antibiotics.

The subject of therapeutic termination of pregnancy is altogether unsuited for discussion in such a limited text. In the opinion of this reviewer the author, in spite of his recognised eminence and authority in his speciality, has set himself a task impossible of fulfilment without misleading the novice in various ways.

H. L. H. G.